



Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

# Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program



Wisconsin

## What is the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program?

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program for people who want to develop or improve wildlife habitat on private lands. It provides both technical assistance and cost sharing to help establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat.

## How WHIP Works

Landowners agree to prepare and implement a wildlife habitat development plan. The U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical and financial assistance for the initial establishment of wildlife habitat development practices. Payments are to cost-share practices only; WHIP does not provide rental income or easement purchase payments.

## The Plan

Participants work with NRCS to prepare a wildlife habitat development plan. The plan describes the landowner's goals for improving wildlife habitat, includes a list of practices and a schedule for installing them, and details the steps necessary to maintain the habitat for the life of the agreement.

## Cost-Share Assistance

NRCS provides the technical assistance with cost-share payments used to establish, maintain, or replace wildlife habitat practices. Cost-sharing will reimburse up to 75 percent of costs. Federal or State wildlife agencies or private organizations may provide additional funding or expertise to help complete a project. Generally the total cost share cannot exceed \$10,000 per contract.

The cost-share agreement normally lasts a minimum of 10 years from the date the contract is signed. Under the agreement, the landowner agrees to maintain the cost-shared practices and allow NRCS access to monitor the effectiveness of the practices.

## What's Eligible?

Generally, five acres is the minimum contract size. Almost any type of land may be eligible, including:

- agricultural or non-agricultural land
- woodlots      •pasture land
- streambanks

Land that was not eligible for other habitat restoration programs may be eligible for WHIP.

To participate in WHIP, you must own or have control of the land under consideration.



## What Land is Not Eligible?

Land currently enrolled in the Water Bank Program, Conservation Reserve Program, Wetlands Reserve Program, or other similar program is not eligible. Land is also ineligible if it is used for mitigation, if the site is owned by the Federal Government, or if USDA determines that onsite or offsite conditions would undermine or reduce the benefits of habitat development.

## Wisconsin Priorities

WHIP proposals will be evaluated based on Wisconsin wildlife habitat priorities. Requests are scored on a number of factors, including type of habitat to be established, size, proximity to other wildlife areas, location within designated priority area, and cost.

### Type of Habitat

### Costshared Practices

Prairie restoration  
grasslands, savannah

→ fencing; burning; seeding

Streams

→ instream structures;  
fencing, seeding

Woodlots  
planting

→ fencing, limited tree

Pasture in rotational  
grazing system  
nesting)

→ Warm season grass  
(grazed after

## Expected Results

In Wisconsin, WHIP is emphasizing re-establishment of declining species and habitats, including prairie chickens, meadowlarks, sharp-tailed grouse, Karner blue butterfly, smallmouth bass, blue-winged teal, and many other species of grassland birds, reptiles, insects and small mammals.

## Some of the opportunities

- Improve and fence woodlots
- Create warm season grass pastures for rotational grazing
- Install in-stream structures to provide fish habitat
- Restore prairie grass and wildflowers

## For More Information

For more information about WHIP, contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service or your local USDA Service Center listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture. Information is also available on NRCS's World Wide Web site at [www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov)

*No public  
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